

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

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2 A cell switch node (20) has a first switch plane (22); a second switch plane (24);  
3 a sender switch port interface unit (26<sub>S</sub>); and a receiver switch port interface unit (26<sub>R</sub>).  
4 The sender switch port interface unit sends maintenance cells to the receiver switch port  
5 interface unit via the first switch plane and the second switch plane. The maintenance  
6 cells are applied to the first switch plane and the second switch plane in a predetermined  
7 sequence. The receiver switch port interface unit detects an erroneous switch plane  
8 when the maintenance cells from the sender switch port interface unit do not arrive in  
9 the predetermined sequence.